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THE KANT CENTENNIAL.

DELIVERED AT THE CENTENNIAL OF KANT'S "KRITIK," AT THE CONCORD SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, AUGUST 4, 1881, BY JOHN W. MEARS.

It is certainly rather to the partiality and over-kindly estimate of my services, than to their intrinsic merit, that I owe my presence and place to-day amid this distinguished group of lecturers and savants. Most happy, indeed, am I to be among them, to breathe the inspiring atmosphere of this home of American meditation, to share the repose of this centre of idealism in American literature, and to dwell under the roof-tree where once a beautiful idyl of a domestic life was enacted, and where now is transpiring that combination of profound and definite thinking, that harmonizing of faith with philosophy, of which the scientific world has been in chronic need from the beginning until now. Mine is the privilege, the advantage is mine. Yours may be the suffering and the penalty, which ought to be endured solely by the over-indulgent managers who have drawn me within this charming environment.

For it is no profound knowledge of the illustrious thinker whose first great work we are here to commemorate, no subtle criticism of his splendid achievements, no comprehensive study of his lofty place in the history of philosophy, no athletic wrestle in his spirit

with the deep problems of thought, which I can contribute to the grand cumulus of treasures which are gathered and laid at the feet of the learners in this Concord School of Philosophy. Mine has been the humbler task of calling the attention of American thinkers to the fact that a suitable time had arrived for bringing into general notice, and subjecting to a fresh investigation, the inestimable services of Immanuel Kant. A type of thinking so wholesome in its limitations, and yet so inspiring in its impulses, so satisfying to all who sought depth and thoroughness in contrast with the superficial, the sensational, and the presuming, seemed to me eminently worthy of a wider celebrity and of a more urgent commendation to the leaders of thought and of education than it yet enjoyed, at least in our own country. Now, evidently, was the time ; the centennial of the publication of the "Kritik" appeared to be the supreme opportunity for rendering this service to the memory of the philosopher, and for rendering to the American mind the service of unfolding to it as fully as possible the grandeur of the man and the primacy and originality of his methods. American thought had been slowly growing into a state of competency, preparedness, and especial need of this service. Heralds of Kant had been crying in the wilderness. Hamilton and Edinburgh had actually merged the Scottish School of Psychology into a kind of semi-Kantianism, so that we in America, receiving as we so generally did our instruction in philosophy through the Scottish schools, imbibed a Kantian atmosphere without knowing it by name. De Quincey and Carlyle in literature, Coleridge in vague rhapsodizing, and Wordsworth, in whom Sir William Hamilton detected Kantian ideas, have aided mightily in this preliminary work of casting up a highway, of removing obstacles, or of indicating the time and better direction which thought must travel. Meiklejohn, with his really meritorious and intelligible translation, put the "Kritik" itself in reach of English readers. While Professor Hedge in Harvard, Professor Marsh in the University of Vermont, and Professor Hickok of Auburn Seminary and of Union College, had, in various ways, labored to introduce into the curriculum of metaphysical study the Kantian principles and methods. Dr. Hickok, who is now enjoying a green old age in the classic retreat of Amherst, Massachusetts, deserves special mention as the constructor of a comprehensive system of philosophy, embracing

psychology, morals, metaphysics, and the elements of natural theology, in which the impulse and impress of Kant is everywhere perceptible, and whose students of the not remote past unite a reverence for their teacher with an enthusiasm for Kant; in fact, forming an early anticipation of the feeling now diffusing wherever advanced learning has a foothold in America. These were isolated workers with no common understanding or systematic educational plan.

The era of ripeness in America for the general study of Kant was rapidly hastened by the appearance of the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy" and the truly extraordinary amount and quality of the work which was steadily put into that bold, that heroic literary venture. In that journal the West answered the East: St. Louis responded to Concord, and it is a fair question whether the oracular transcendentalists of Massachusetts were not themselves transcended by the clean-cut but profound speculators of Missouri and Illinois. It was a happy omen for philosophy in America when they came together and harmonized so beautifully in this Concord School of Philosophy. When I received from the lips of the venerable but buoyant Alcott on the one hand, and deciphered from the chirography of Dr. Harris on the other, a hearty approval of the proposal to celebrate the centennial of Kant's "Kritik," you will not wonder if I felt that no further endorsement was necessary, and that a certain fulness of time indicated by these coincidences for the emphatic recommendation of the study and the teaching of Kant among all our higher educational circles in America had arrived.

A sudden and timely increase in the number and character of the specific helps to the study of Kant now also appeared, the work of those earlier students who meanwhile had been pioneering their way little aided by their predecessors. For it seems to me those who first accomplished the great task of fairly comprehending the "Kritik" must have been men of nearly the same acumen and metaphysical endurance as the author himself. And great is our indebtedness to these predecessors and guides, who save us so much of our time, though they deprive us of some of the discipline which would be derived from making our unassisted way into the entirely new world of thought created by the author of the "Kritik." But art is long and life is fleeting, and we who

wish to know something beside Kant, thankfully accept the aid of such efficient helpers as was Kant himself in his "Prolegomena," as well as Mahaffy, of the Dublin University, in his as yet unfinished translation, condensation, and annotation of the "Prolegomena" and the "Kritik," the latter of which is as yet unfinished ; of Monck, of the same institution, whose "Introduction" I was sorry to find out of print when I tried to get a copy ; of Edward Caird, through whose enlarged Hegelian vision we get a wonderfully attractive, readable, and intelligible view and criticism of the "Kritik," and finally of Professor Watson, of Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. His book just published is an octavo of four hundred pages, entitled "Kant and his English Critics," in which Kant himself is explained in that most lively method by the way of contrast and vindication, in the line of refutation of his opponents, in which Kant's opinions are set in bold relief against the contrary opinions of every school of thought with which he can be placed in contrast. A rich fund of information upon these schools is thus advantageously grouped with the Kantian investigation, and the book becomes one of the most valuable of modern additions to the history of philosophy in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The article proposing a centennial of the "Kritik" was published in the "Penn Monthly" of Philadelphia, and was promptly and favorably responded to, among others by Mr. Libbey of the "Princeton Review," by the "Boston Advertiser," the "Utica Herald," and the "New York Evangelist." The article was reprinted as a circular and sent to all the leading collegiate institutions of the country as well as to the managers of the Concord School. Most pleasing and abundant were the responses which the circular drew forth. They came from Harvard, and Amherst, and Yale, and Brown, and Vermont ; from Johns Hopkins, from Union, from Madison, from Cornell, from the University of the City of New York, from Syracuse, from Lafayette and the University of Pennsylvania, from Grinnell in Iowa, from the University of California, from the United States Government Survey in Washington, from the Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and the McGill University in Montreal.

Already at Saratoga a celebration of the centennial has been held, and papers of importance and interest upon Kant have been

read. But here, in this atmosphere of philosophic repose, in this Academe of the western world, you, by devoting thrice the time and thrice the discussion to the great German, are more nearly approaching that adequate treatment of the "Kritik" which the hundredth anniversary of its appearance justifies and demands.

My standpoint is one of purely practical interest. I address, or aim to address, an audience which, unlike many of my present hearers, has not waked up sufficiently or at all to the commanding importance of the study of the "Kritik," and has not gone into or through those preliminary studies which would qualify them for understanding, far less for criticising, the work of Kant. I would if possible, through this celebration, infuse a wholesome discontent through the minds of those instructors in philosophy who have hitherto dispensed with the speculative element in their teaching. I go upon the analogy of the new convert to Christianity, who, even before he has learned by any extensive experience the nature of his new position, is zealous and enthusiastic that others, too, shall enjoy his deliverance and share his happiness in the enlargement of his mental vision and the elevation and freshness of his new consciousness. This is my view of the significance of the centennial.

Immanuel Kant (born 1724, died 1804) during his whole life of eighty years travelled scarcely out of the shadows of the paternal roof-tree. His famous book, "The Kritik," fell nearly dead from the press. Yet to-day, one hundred years since that issue, and here, three thousand miles from Königsberg, we are met to celebrate the appearance of the "Kritik" in the world. We are assembled to ponder the work of a philosopher who has thrown doubt upon the reality of time and space, and to whom things in themselves stood in broad contrast with phenomena. How unreal are time and space in their relation to his reputation and influence, and how deceiving were the phenomena which attended upon the publication of the "Kritik." We may safely affirm that nowhere in the history of philosophy has the contradiction between appearance and fact been so striking and overwhelming. Certainly at no point in the history of modern philosophy is an epoch more definitely marked and a new departure more clearly determined than has been done by the "Kritik," which for two years gave

scarcely a sign of animation, and seemed destined to pass away without recognition by the public.

What, then, is the secret of the interest which attends the name of Kant, which has brought together this group of American thinkers and educators, and inclined them to stamp the year as worthy of commemoration? It is not that England and Scotland and France and America have no honored names in their lists of philosophers. It is not that a more elegant phraseology than the downright technical and even uncouth style of the German has not been found to clothe profound thoughts. It is not that the higher problems of philosophy have been avoided by such thinkers as Jonathan Edwards, Sir William Hamilton, and Cousin. It is not that profundity and subtlety and thoroughness and scientific clearness died with Kant, in the land of his birth. If Kant himself was a marvel, equally was the line of thinkers that followed Kant a marvel—a resplendent procession of the crowned kings of philosophy. It is not that we blindly bow to the authority of Kant, and make him who was the most searching critic of authority an object of indiscriminate reverence. It is not because we derive from Kant new and valuable material which we may incorporate and weave into the old web of our thoughts. It is because we find in Kant and his "Kritik" a real beginning from which the age and from which we ourselves may recommence and reconstruct our thinking upon a higher plane. It is because the great questions which give to philosophy its reality, its undying charm, its incalculable value, when on the point of being betrayed by errorists, or surrendered by a shallow advocacy, were rescued at vast labor and pains by Kant. It is because he restored the brightness and legibility of the divine inscription upon the nature of man, which asserted the everlasting primacy and supremacy of mind over matter in the universe, but which an earthly-minded and perverse speculation sought and still seeks to obliterate, and had at least succeeded in grievously obscuring. It is because the philosopher of the year 1781 after Christ reasserts in substance the positions of the philosopher of 381 years before Christ—Kant making good against the materialists what Plato had maintained against the atheists, viz., the cause of all impiety and irreligion among men is that, reversing in themselves the relative subordination of mind and body, they have in like manner in the uni-

verse made that to be first which is second ; and that to be second which is first ; for while, in the generation of all things, intelligence and final causes precede matter and efficient causes, they, on the contrary, have viewed matter and material things as absolutely prior in the order of existence to intelligence and design, and thus departing from an original error in themselves, they have ended in the subversion of the Godhead.

The conscious purpose of Kant was not, indeed, to combat atheism or materialism, but sensationalism. Locke, in his reckoning of the furniture of the mind, had overlooked the inherent qualities and the very nature of the mind itself. It was a piece of white paper, and all its acquisitions were but records inscribed upon it from without. This assuredly was the impression which Locke made upon the minds of his contemporaries, whatever may have been suggested to more careful students by later utterances of the philosophers. Hume showed that sensationalism, as thus taught by Locke, had no place for the idea of cause ; the pen of experience could not write upon the mind that which it did not possess. The characterless and void intellect was only the passive recipient of knowledge, and if sensationalism were true, then necessary, *a priori* ideas were pure illusions, no better than dreams. The ideas of Plato, the forms of Aristotle, the supersensual realities which had filled the souls of philosophers and sages and saints, were groundless fancies. Metaphysics was discredited or driven to dogmatism as a last resource. The queen of the sciences was disenthroned. Kant compares her position to that of Helen of Troy, quoting the lines of Ovid : "Once mightiest of things, powerful in progeny and in connections, now a poor exile stripped of her resources, an object of contempt and scorn."

No matter what specific doctrines Kant taught, or in how many respects his work may be open to criticism, and exception and criticism is what we are called to exercise on this occasion, it remains true that Kant achieved the grand work of arresting the sensationalists, and of vindicating to mind its lofty prerogatives of spontaneous and independent powers and possessions. He turned the tables on the sensationalists by showing that experience itself must depend upon those powers and possessions in order to its very existence and meaning as experience, to a thinking being. And this he did, not by treading over again the worn pathway of dog-

matic assertion, not by unscientific appeals to consciousness, but by the keenest research amid the obscure and intricate processes of thought, where he was the heroic pioneer without a blaze or a footprint to guide his steps. He has turned to us the other side, the inside, the underside of the mind. His marvellous penetration and luminous intellect have made mental facts not before detected glow with an inherent distinctness and originality. If philosophy be admitted the most effective gymnastic of the mind, Kant has raised this discipline to the highest potency by teaching us the philosophy of our philosophizing, by teaching us to think systematically upon our systematic thinking; by leading us to trace to their source, to transcend our first principles, our *a priori* ideas.

Locke and his school have taught us abundantly what it is to compare and associate objects; Kant has taught us to compare the very processes of comparison themselves. We had learned what it was to classify objects, and again to classify classes of objects to the utmost range of the universe; Kant has taught us to classify and to unify the acts of classification, to think ourselves thinking abstractly, to behold the thinking faculty evolving and imposing its own laws upon its own thinking.

Before Copernicus, students of natural science and mankind generally regarded the material universe, the starry heavens, as revolving around the earth, and in a certain sense dependent upon it. Before Kant, philosophy showed a marked tendency to regard the mind as little more than an observer of the external world around which it revolved, and a mere recipient of sensations impressed upon it from without. As with Copernicus the supposed relative position of earth and heaven was reversed, and the earth was found to revolve and to be subordinate, while heaven was independent and stable, so with Kant mind became central and *gave* law, while the external world moved around it and showed its conformity to the laws which the mind, from its own spontaneous activity, proposed as alone valid and explanatory of the processes of the material universe.

It was no servile pupilage of nature which acquainted Kepler and Galileo and Torricelli and Faraday and Agassiz with the great physical discoveries connected with their names. It was the application of principles evolved from the fertile sources of their

own versatile minds. Even Tyndall in our day demands the exercise of scientific imagination as the herald of discovery, and President Porter, in his "Human Intellect" and "Elements," clearly vindicates a place for the imagination in the domain of physics. (See p. xxvii, Bohn's edition.) Reason, says Kant, must approach Nature with her own principles, which alone can pass for laws in one hand, and with the experiment which she has planned in the other, to be instructed, indeed, by Nature—not as a pupil who is to accept everything the master chooses to say, but as a judge who requires the witness simply to answer the questions which he proposes.

Thus, according to Kant, reason had already taken the central position relatively to the material universe in the progress of physical discovery, and had indicated its supremacy, although the discoverers themselves were unconscious of the fact. And it was a great, though only preliminary, service rendered by Kant to philosophy, and a heavy blow already dealt at sensationalism, when he pointed out the changed position of mind when purely mental conceptions were applied successfully to the solution of the problems of the physical universe, and when he led men to recognize the fact.

And Kant's triumph in metaphysics is his extension of this principle from the brilliant instances of discovery in physics to the wide field of experience in general. He is the greater Copernicus who shows the elements of experience in the humble relation of satellite, revolving around and obeying the native conceptions of the understanding, which are the real centre of the universe of knowledge. Instead of an inner life, built up of impressions borne in upon us from without, the inner life is the active, incessant manipulation, the artistic transformation of the raw unmeaning materials presented to us by the inner and the outer sense. These materials are not objects, and their presence does not constitute them experience, until they have passed through the pre-existing moulds of the mind and have taken their shape. They are not in space or in time of themselves; they are neither one, nor many, nor all; they are neither like nor unlike; they are neither substance nor qualities, neither cause nor effect; they have, in fact, no being, except as the mind by its own insight recognizes or affirms it of them. They are not qualified to bring

such report of themselves to the mind. Above all, they do not possess in themselves that unity, either in subordinate groups or as a whole, of experience which it is the prerogative of consciousness alone to bestow and to enforce upon them.

Intuitions as Kant names them, original perceptions as we might call them, are, indeed, the indispensable raw materials of experience, but of themselves they are no more experience than gold and silver bullion of themselves are coin of the realm. Conceptions without intuitions are empty, but intuitions without conceptions are blind. Blind sensationalism! we are done with that since Kant, and it is worth while to celebrate our deliverance and the deliverer once in a hundred years at least.

The centennial of our own national existence only preceded the centennial of the "Kritik" five years. We celebrated the hundredth year of our national life with a pomp and an *éclat* that have faded as yet but little from our memories. But the victory of Kant over sensationalism, the centennial of which victory we celebrate to-day, involves principles that cannot be too urgently commended to the nation now well entered upon its second century. We demand a pure and an elevated philosophy for the youth of America. We seek to emphasize the best elements of Kant's teaching as an invaluable wholesome tonic and stimulus to the minds of our students.

The value of the study of the "Kritik" as a mental gymnastic is too evident to be discussed here. If Mr. Gustave Masson, in his "Recent British Philosophy," could fairly applaud Sir William Hamilton for "doing more than any other man to reinstate the worship of Difficulty in the higher minds of Great Britain," much more may we esteem and welcome the "Kritik" as an instrument of mental training. Mr. Mahaffy, in fact, declares that "apart from the actual knowledge attained by the acute analysis and large insight of such a thinker as Kant, the mastering of his system implies a mental gymnastic superior to that which can be obtained even from the study of higher mathematics." ("Princeton Review," July, 1878.) Mr. Mahaffy falls into a fashion, becoming quite too fashionable just now, of disparaging the merits of Sir William Hamilton. Not satisfied with declaring that his teachings may be called extinct, he asserts with a courtesy that must cause a reaction in those who hear it: "It will be difficult

in the history of philosophy to find a man more overrated while he lived, and despised as soon as he was unable to defend his own opinions." With similar unpardonable rudeness he speaks of a doctrine "more like old Reid's than anything else." On the contrary, we wish just here to emphasize the merit of Sir William Hamilton (if for nothing else) as preparing the way by his teachings for the reception of Kantian ideas in the minds of multitudes of English and American thinkers. Trained as the great majority of us have been, under the influence of the Scottish school, the teaching of Sir William formed a necessary transition from the psychological speculations of his predecessors to the grapple in dead earnest with the higher and subtler problems of philosophy. One might say that all that is difficult and aspiring in Sir William was appropriated more or less consciously from Kant, and those who have drilled themselves thoroughly on the former pass without a shock, and by a process already made familiar, into the likeness of the latter. As long as there are minds which need to be led across the same intervening ground, the teaching of Hamilton will not be extinct, even with those who esteem the "*Kritik*" as an instrument of intellectual training as highly as does Mr. Mahaffy. We shall look in vain for a better means of raising the ordinary thought of Great Britain and America to the plane of Kantian than the philosophy of Sir William. Or does any one suppose it possible to begin with Kant or with advanced Kantian ideas?

For an individual mind of a peculiar mould, as determined by race and training, to remould and modify its own habits of thought so far as to recognize, appreciate, and in part adopt a style and method of thought belonging to quite another type of mind only remotely connected in race with its own, and that style of thought really original and peculiar in the race to which it belonged, is an achievement costing an immense amount of mental effort. Even the most active and laborious of Scotch and English thinkers refused at first to undergo the prolonged and patient endeavor which was necessary to the understanding of the "*Kritik*." It was a struggle for them to admit the possibility of any other than their wonted methods of psychological analysis and dogmatic treatment of first or ultimate truths. And then to bring into play unused powers of thought, gradually to work themselves to the

utterly novel standpoint of Kant, to catch first a mere glimmer of the meaning of his highly technical nomenclature; after gaining detached parts of his meaning to begin again in the hope of making an intelligible synthesis of the fragments; to gradually see that a great, a valuable, and yet a never suspected truth is there if you can only get a firm hold of it—this is a process which gives unwonted suppleness to the process of meditation and observation, which widens the grasp and enlarges the vision and deepens the insight of the mind. And if one seeks those equally high, perhaps higher, grades of discipline to be found in the study of Kant's successors, and in the subsequent epochs of German speculation down to our day, and including even schools of distinctly opposite tendency, let him understand that the only introduction to those studies is through the "Kritik" and its accompanying treatise, the "Prolegomena."

2. In the powerful current which sets towards physical studies, and which is too likely to end in the vortex of materialism, American students, in order to maintain their footing, need to be thoroughly versed in the chief doctrines of the "Kritik." They need not and cannot be drawn away from the pursuit of physical sciences, but they must be made to see that there is no conflict between those branches and a true philosophy. They must be shown that the true spirit in which to study the physical is the metaphysical. We must seek to permeate the physical with the metaphysical as its proper and wholesome atmosphere. We must learn to appreciate the discovery of Kant, that the knowledge of the empirical is not itself empirical knowledge; that the empirical, as such, cannot be known at all; that the metaphysical is fundamental, and the physical is derivative; that the very assault upon the metaphysical must start from metaphysical premises; that materialism itself is compelled to make assumptions which are essentially metaphysical, and can scarcely construct a definition of matter except with material derived from metaphysics.

"To proceed from sense to consciousness," says Caird, "and to explain consciousness by sense, is a gigantic hysteron-proteron; for it is only in relation to consciousness that sense, like every other object, becomes intelligible. To explain time and space psychologically or physiologically is to explain them by phenomena which are known only under conditions of time and space. The 'physiologist'

of mind,' who asserts that mind is essentially a function of the material organism, may fairly be met by the objection of Kant, that his objection is transcendent. To go beyond the intelligence in order to explain the intelligence is to cut away the ground on which we are standing. So, again, when the psychologist applies the laws of association to the genesis of mind he is obliged to presuppose a fixed and definite world of objects, acting under conditions of space and time upon the sensitive subject, in order by this means to explain how the ideas of the world and of himself may be awakened on that subject. The theory is stated in terms of the consciousness if he pretends to explain." ("Caird's Criticism," p. 398.)

In a recent work of fiction one of the leading characters is made to speak in the positivist and sceptical tone frequently heard nowadays. "For my life I cannot get beyond what I see and hear, smell, taste and feel. Nature is big enough and beautiful enough for me. I cannot get beyond it, and I do not wish to. Whenever I hear people wrangling about things unseen, about what is called spiritual things, it reminds me of children. Did you ever hold out your hands, when a child, and whirl round and round until you were so dizzy you could not walk straight when you stopped? I find too much to do without going into that, and I won't do it." On the contrary, as we are taught best of all by Kant, it is the unseen and the spiritual which gives to the seen and the material its entire significance. We do and we must get beyond nature in order to know it as "nature," and in order to measure and to value it as "big" or as "beautiful." It may, indeed, at first confuse us to attempt to see ourselves exercising those wonderful spiritual functions, but when our admirable teacher has once pointed them out to us, we see that it is the positivist and the materialist who has no footing except as he borrows it from the metaphysician and the transcendentalist. And as the first principles of the "Kritik" enter into the teaching of our age and country, we shall cease to hear such ignorant assumptions in educated circles, and shall find a nobler estimate of the nature and works of the thinking faculty generally diffused even among the masses.

3. Mr. Mahaffy makes it a great point against the Scotch philosophers before Hamilton, that they laid stress upon the supposed

injurious tendencies of systems which, as he says, they could not otherwise discredit. "Any one," he says, "who is familiar with the works of that time will remember how much more frequently *alarming* conclusions are avoided than false ones refuted. Provided, in fact, that a theory could be shown *alarming*, it had been sufficiently answered." ("P. R.", July, 1878, p. 225.) This is in the spirit of Mr. Buckle's assault upon Reid (3, 348), whom he accuses of timidity "amounting almost to moral cowardice," because he took into account not only the question of the falsity, but that of the danger, of Hume's opinion. A philosopher, he claims, "should refuse to estimate the practical tendency of his speculations." In a similar spirit, M. Taine criticises M. Cousin, and would even deny to him the title of philosopher, because he allows considerations of human welfare to influence his philosophical speculations. The claim that the scientific spirit is utterly indifferent to and unconcerned about results is in fact heard everywhere to-day. The gospel idea, and the prevalent and instinctive idea, of testing a tree by its fruits is scouted as inapplicable in the field of pure science. The good or the evil which plainly results from a speculative system is not recognized as a leading or as a subordinate test of its truth.

We cannot subscribe to this dogma in its length and breadth, nor do we believe that it can ever prevail. The highest good cannot thus be separated from the highest truth. The man who earnestly seeks the one necessarily embraces the other from any fairly chosen point of view. The practical and the speculative share a common life. Speculation will annihilate itself when it severs the vital cord which connects it with practical issues. Intellectual philosophy must advance, if it advances at all, in view of the best results of moral philosophy.

If this is not true of professional thinkers and theorists, it is doubtless true of teachers and of those who would recommend and propagate any speculative system or doctrine. They must expect to be confronted at once with questions as to results and tendencies. To deny the validity or pertinency of such questions would be ill-humored and futile. Certainly a gathering like this must expect to be closely questioned. A centennial of Kant's "*Kritik!*" *Cui bono?* Was not Kant, and especially Kant's "*Kritik*," the beginning of the curse of rationalism, the signal

for the drying up of the religious sentiment and the disappearance of spirituality from the inner life of Germany, turning it into a dreary waste? Did it not give the signal for that movement of German thought which, through the whole century, has startled the sober portion of mankind with the unparalleled audacity of its claims to absolute knowledge, and which now, as if the wings with which it promised to mount the throne of day were of wax, tumbles ignominiously into the Serbonian bog of pessimism, with the deeper depth of nihilism yawning beneath it? Did not Kant turn religion out by the front door, and then try to bring it in by the back door of speculation? Surely such questions are not altogether unnatural, and it is idle in any one, in the name of pure science, to attempt to brush them aside.

The absurdity of the charge, that such questions are unscientific and to be left unnoticed by the genuine seeker of truth, is proved by the example of the master of scientific thinkers, Kant himself. Anticipating and deeply concerned for the possible evil results of his speculations, if left as they stood in the "Kritik," he imposed upon himself supplementary tasks only second in importance to the "Kritik" itself.

One need only cursorily examine the latter part of the preface to the second edition of the "Kritik" to see how honestly and ingenuously the author was concerned for the practical aspects of his work. He there (p. xxxvi) speaks of the important service which it will render to reason, to the inquiring mind of youth, and especially of the inestimable benefit it will confer upon morality and religion. This it will do by showing that all the objections urged against them may be silenced forever by the Socratic method—that is to say, by proving the ignorance of the objector. Criticism alone, he claims, can strike a blow at the root of materialism, atheism, free thinking, fanaticism, and superstition, which are universally injurious, as well as of idealism and scepticism, which are dangerous to the school.

I am aware of the accusation made against the second edition of the "Kritik"—an accusation inspired probably by the same spirit which dictated the dogma already referred to, requiring the absolute divorce of the speculative and the practical. It is the accusation of Schopenhauer that the alterations in the second edition were the result of unworthy motives, and are a proof of servile

weakness. If Schopenhauer meant only to affirm that a reference to practical ends is unworthy of a scientist and a proof of weakness, we can let it pass. The objection will not in the least hinder our celebration, but rather add a new element to our enthusiasm. Kant himself encourages us to enjoin upon the thinkers and students of America the duty of weighing the practical objections to the "Kritik." We urge it as one of the important disciplinary advantages of the study, that it thus suggests and invites to dispassionate investigation of its true tendencies. It is an element in the impulse which we wish by this celebration to give to Kantian studies in this age and country.

But, first of all, let us labor to understand the "Kritik." That is our first business. Objections and tendencies can be fairly weighed only after we have made ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the work. Superficial and cursory examination will start suspicions and prejudices without yielding any of the grand advantages which we ought to and can derive from the study. And while we cannot give assurance that the fairest and most careful study will clear up difficulties and relieve the "Kritik" of every particle of the opprobrium which has fallen to its lot in the course of the century, yet the dear-bought experience of the century is at our command to guard us against a repetition of its errors, and we may hope, in a shorter time and with less toil, to reach a clear air and a firm ground of speculation.

Aside, therefore, from the purely scientific interest involved in such a celebration, we wish our centennial to promote the study of the "Kritik:" (1) as a mental gymnastic of the highest efficiency; (2) as an effective mental tonic against the relaxing and debilitating tendencies of sensationalism and materialism, and (3) as itself inviting enquiry into its own practical tendencies and pointing to the means of testing them in further works of its author, and to the splendid attempts which have been made by his successors to supplement and to develop his doctrines.